

Protest forces CIA to cancel recruiting visit

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CIA recruiting was canceled at I.U. because of a protest rally Wednesday afternoon, during which about 150 demonstrators heard speakers berate CIA actions and protest campus recruitment.

Sign-carrying protesters marched from the steps of the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU) to Bryan Hall, where the number of protesters diminished to about half under a drizzling rain. The rally lasted about 1½ hours.

The decision to cancel recruitment interviews, which were scheduled for Wednesday through Friday, came Tuesday afternoon after the CIA learned there might be a protest, according to John Forrester, CIA deputy chief of recruitment in Washington, D.C.

"It is our policy when a situation like this arises to cancel all of the interviews scheduled in the best interests of the University," he said. "We wouldn't want to be the focal point of a major confrontation."

Demonstrators at Bryan Hall, which houses administration offices, demanded access to files of CIA activity on campus that they believed I.U. had, but officials denied the request without admitting such files exist.

Protesters also requested that I.U. President John W. Ryan address the group, but he was out of town.

Forrester said protests against CIA recruitment are extremely rare, and that I.U. was the first campus to protest within the past year. "This type of thing was common in 1968, but it just doesn't happen today," he said.

Forrester said forcing recruitment during the protests would endanger good university relations nationwide, as well as placing other recruiting firms in an uncomfortable situation.

CIA recruiter Charles Minich who was scheduled to conduct the I.U. recruiting sessions, was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

The crowd of demonstrators cheered when a speaker announced the CIA recruiting had been canceled. John Fry, senior and one of the organizers of the rally, called it "a significant victory."

"We've got these people off campus, and we've got to keep them off," he told the crowd. "We need a continued campaign against the CIA and the atrocities it has committed."

"Today is only the beginning," Fry said after the rally. His red hair and black suit were wet from the drizzle.

"Before this rally, we didn't really know how much support we had on campus. Now our job is to organize and educate more of the students," Fry said.

Handbills distributed by the Committee Against Campus Complicity with the CIA, which sponsored the rally, detailed recently disclosed CIA actions. They said the CIA had engaged in domestic spying on students and faculty who opposed the Vietnam conflict, promoted foreign assassinations and grossly underestimated its expenses.

At one point in the rally some protesters wanted to storm Bryan Hall to get CIA files they believed were there. Rally organizers persuaded the demonstrators to disband, however.

"We had to convince them of the lessons we learned in the anti-war movement," Fry said. "We would have been uselessly victimized if we tried to get into Ryan's office."

"This gives me a feeling for the old days," said Mike Garcher, senior, who was arrested during the May 1971 anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C.

"Back then I was really pissed off and radicalized," he said. "This is like old times."

He said students today are less dedicated than during the anti-war demonstrations. Gaucher noted a feeling of sarcasm in the crowd, as Leon Varjian circulated among the crowd disguised as a CIA agent. The CIA tag on his black coat and the plastic dagger he waved around gave him away.

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